



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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Investigative Guidelines for Drug and Alcohol Exposure 3-22-1990

In addition to other CP&P assessment activities ([CP&P-II-C-5-1100](#), [CP&P-II-C-2-200](#)), the Worker gathers information specific to a substance use disorder referral. The Supervisor and Worker conference and determine the appropriate case activities for the individual case. The Worker's activities may include any or all of the following:

- interviewing the parent(s) and other family members.
- assessing the likelihood of the parents remaining in the community for treatment and follow-up medical care, being aware that drug-involved parents are often very mobile and often live a transient life style.
- assessing the parents' home and living arrangements, being aware that drug-involved mothers often live in homes with numerous companions and often have attendant problems with child neglect. The Worker goes to the home, finds out who lives there, and evaluates the functioning of other children and other household members. It is particularly important to determine if the mother is currently competent in her parenting with other siblings, as an indicator of potential competency with the infant.
- consulting with the hospital nurses in regard to parent/child interactions, parents' visitations, child characteristics, and level of care required for the particular child. (Nurses have the most frequent first-hand contact with infants and parents.)
- requesting that the parent obtain a drug/alcohol evaluation. Request that parent(s) sign a release of information to allow CP&P and treatment providers to share information and jointly plan. Consult with drug treatment staff regarding the type of treatment indicated and the recommended treatment plan. Ask for information about types, severity, and history of drug usage.

- consulting with law enforcement in regard to the parents' criminal history and history of drug involvement, being aware that criminal history and chronic drug use are high risk for lack of follow through in treatment.
- consulting with the child's pediatrician/clinic to determine: the exact medical condition of the baby; necessary follow-up medical care including medication; all special medical needs of the baby; whether the baby needs an apnea monitor; and what is the baby's risk of SIDS and HIV infection.
- consulting and planning with the public health nurse to determine a coordinated plan for follow up services when applicable, unless these services have already been arranged by the hospital.
- coordinating with the hospital social worker to arrange staffing, services, and hospital evaluation as needed.
- participating in a pre-discharge case conference with hospital staff.

The Child

The Worker consults with the hospital and determines the following information about the child:

- Condition/Behaviors

What is the child's medical condition? Are there special care needs? To what extent is the child irritable or lethargic? Are there special equipment or medication needs? Will the child need an Early Intervention Program and, if so, will the hospital initiate the referral?

- Follow-up

At what specialty clinics will the infant require medical follow-up? What medical follow-up is needed? Will Visiting Nurse Services be arranged by hospital social services?

The Parent

The Worker determines the following information regarding the parents. The Worker first consults with the hospital to determine what information about the parents is already known.

- History of Substance Use Disorder

What is the parent's pattern and history of substance use? What substance(s) were taken and how often? Is the parent using substances now? What is the method of use? Did the mother use substances during pregnancy?

- Substance Use Disorder Treatment

What is the parent's history of substance use disorder treatment? When did she enter? Is she currently in treatment? Is she considered compliant?

- Limitations/Strengths

Does the parent have physical, intellectual, or emotional problems which would impact on her ability to care for the child? What is the parent's age and school and/or work history? What is the parent's ability to effectively use financial resources?

- Health

Are the parents concerned about the risk of HIV and have they been tested? If tested, what are the results?

- Parenting

Does the parent exhibit appropriate parenting skills and seem responsive to the infant's needs? Did the mother have prenatal care? Are her expectations and perceptions realistic?

How many other children are in the home? Are siblings well cared for? Are immunizations current? Do siblings attend school on a regular basis? What is the parent's ability to comply with medical follow-up treatment needed for the child?

- Prior Abuse/Neglect

Have there been previous allegations of abuse or neglect?

The Environment

The Worker determines the following information about the family's environment:

- Community Supports/Problems

What supports are available? Are there responsible family members or friends who can assist the parent in caring for the child? Does the parent have supports within the community, e.g., church or community group? Are

other household members suspected to be involved in drug activity? Is there a history of violence within the household?

- Home Conditions

What are the environmental conditions of the home? Is the home clean? Are utilities working? Are there safety hazards? Is there evidence of preparation for the infant?